HIS SPOILED STORY

By H. L. STURTEVANT.

When Walter Tolland was promoted from an ordinary cub reporter to be dramatic critic for the Argus, he naturally felt that his future was assured. To be appointed dramatic critic of a first-class metropolitan newspaper implied a remarkable discernment of his abilities on the part of the managing editor. So he promptly bought Bray's "How to Be a Dramatic Critic," and Dugmore's "The Stage and the Reporter," pored over them for a few days, and started out to make a reputation.

What the managing editor had actually said to the city editor was: "I'm tired of these quarrels with the theater people. Put some young cub on the job and tell him to give everyone a show in turn."

Tolland went to "The Girl From a Little Town," and saw at once that, according to the books, Miss Edith Lawrence didn't know the first principles of acting. The show was not much good, anyhow, and he went home and wrote two columns of withering criticism, which the city editor scanned hastily and cut down to a stick and a half.

That stick and a half was enough to blast the reputation of the best actress that ever trod Broadway boards. It took Miss Lawrence and tore her to pieces, made pulp of what was left, and scattered that to the four winds of heaven. Everybody who read it grinned. They knew that Tolland would tone down after a while. It was tough on Miss Lawrence, but it couldn't be helped, and anyway, it was funny.

That afternoon Tolland received a special delivery letter that smelled strongly of musk. It was from Miss

"I've Taken Half a Pound of Strychnine."

Edith Lawrence. It merely asked him whether he would favor her with a visit at her apartment that afternoon at five.

Tolland accepted the invitation with a sense of dogged duty. He felt that perhaps he had gone a little too far, but still he had the reputation of his newspaper to maintain. And, to be frank, he wanted to explain to her that he had been actuated by no personal malice. The case was simply this, Miss Lawrence didn't come up to the standards of Bray and Dugmore.

There was a long wait in the handsomely furnished parlor of Miss Lawrence's flat in the apartment house, but presently Miss Lawrence came in. No, staggered in. She was wearing a blue wrapper with pink flowers on it, in brocaded silk, and her hair was hanging down her back. She staggered across the room and staggered into a chair and collapsed there.

"I thought you would like to see the result of your work, Mr. Tolland," she said.

"I am very sorry," murmured the young man, who had not expected anything so painful as this. "But you see, Miss Lawrence, you really did not act in accordance with the true principles of dramatic art. Now, if you had—"

"Yes, yes," she interrupted, in a hollow voice, "but it doesn't make any difference now, because I shall never act again."

"But, my dear Miss Lawrence," protested Tolland, "you mustn't let yourself be so easily discouraged. Now if you will throw more personality into—"

"I shan't have any personality after another half hour," answered Miss Lawrence. "I've taken half a pound of strychnine."

"What!" yelled the young man, leaping to his feet and staring into the young woman's face.

"I mean half an ounce," she murmured. "You have killed me, Mr. Tolland. And I hope you will be more charitable in future. I—" Here she collapsed with a heartrending groan. "Quick! A doctor!" she gasped. "O, let me live. Telephone, Mr. Tolland. I must live now. I didn't know death was so terrible."

An instant later Tolland was calling up a couple of physicians he knew, then another, and then another. After that he called an ambulance. It was only then that it occurred to him that it would be advisable for him to make himself as scarce as possible. He hurried out of the apartment house and into the street. Then it occurred to him further that the office would be the best place for him, if he was to avoid suspicion. Accordingly, he made his way thither.

But it was desperately lonely in the office, and the warm greeting of the city editor, who had a slack half hour, was too much for him. In a few moments Tolland was confessing everything at the desk, and asking whether he ought to give himself up for murder.

"Thunder, no!" answered the city editor. "Don't you see your duty clear before your eyes, young man?"

"No," gulped Tolland miserably.

"You go back to your desk and write out a full account of the suicide for the next edition," answered the city editor. "But, say! You don't have to put yourself into it, you know."

And Tolland must have had in him the makings of a reporter, because, mechanically taking up his pen, he found himself presently launching into a human interest story describing the suicide of the famous actress. It was only when he had finished that he realized the depths of degradation to which he had fallen. He took the manuscript over to the desk.

"I've done it—but it mustn't be published, Mr. Renn," he said. "I'd lose my position. "I—" gulp, gulp, "I'm going to the police to give myself up."

Mr. Renn, without answering, read the article. As he read it he slapped his leg and chuckled. When he came to the last words Miss Lawrence had uttered, in which she begged to be saved, he laid the manuscript down and burst into a loud guffaw. And Tolland stared at the monster speechlessly. Could it be a human being who saw in such a terrible death of a young and gifted woman nothing but a news story?

Suddenly Renn handed back the story. "It's all right; we won't print it, Tolland," he said. "But it's for your sake, understand. Anyhow, it's too late. Here come the editions of the other papers. Let's see what they have to say about it."

They scanned the headlines on the first page of each of the evening newspapers, on the second, the third, and so right through to the end. But there was not a word about Miss Lawrence's suicide.

"Humph! I guessed they wouldn't fall for it," said Renn. "It takes a very young and immature reporter to fall for a thing like that."

"Do you mean that she was only pretending to have taken strychnine, to get even with me?" gasped Tolland.

"To get even with you? No, my young friend. She wanted to get the story into the newspapers. She saw how verdant you were—or else somebody tipped her off about you, probably her agent. Lord, Tolland, that was an advertising stunt. Don't you understand? If that had got into the Argus it would have been equal to fifty such slatings as you gave her. Go to the show again tonight, Tolland, and you'll see her there as large as life."

Which Tolland did.

Accounting for Apparition.

O. W. Herfert, driver of the San Bernardino, Cal., mountain automobile stage line, declares that night after night he has seen a specter coach of the "'49 days," which sometimes tears with fearful speed down the steep grades and then suddenly disappears as it came. The first time he saw it, he says, he heard many shots. Old-timers intimate that the apparition may have been the result of certain preparations which the driver made to withstand the cold, which is often severe in the mountains.

Which, to Be Decided Later.

She—But if I can't live on my income and you can't live on yours, where would be the advantage of our marrying?

He (thoughtfully)—Well, by putting our incomes together one of us would be able to live, at any rate.

Lady Not Thrown In.

Customer (looking at auto)—What! The lamps not included in the advertised price of the machine. But the lamps are shown in the illustration.

Salesman—My dear sir, so is a very beautiful woman, but we're not giving a lady with each car.

LAND OF QUAINT CUSTOMS

Many Things in the Cumberland Mountains That Seem Peculiar to Visitors.

The great days in the mountains generally depend upon the state of the creek-beds, which are almost the only roads. In the spring these highways are flooded and the mountaineer travels very little. It is in the autumn that sociability is possible. There are "corn-shuckings," "baptizings" (often performed in muddy branch or creek), and the great camp meeting of the mountains, the Baptist association.

It is here in the Cumberlands that all ramifications of the Baptist belief flourish—Hardshell, Missionary, Ironclad and others. Every one within miles attends. They ford the rivers on horseback, drive along the precarious highways in jolt-wagons; horses, mules, oxen, are all pressed into service for this great occasion. Last are the horse traders, a motley, disreputable crowd, often the worse for too much "moonshine." Armed to the teeth, they present the appearance of desperadoes, and it is safe to assert that the religious aspect of the camp meeting has little charm for them.

But perhaps the strangest of all customs is that of holding the preaching services long months after the burial of the dead. Two years have sometimes elapsed before the memorial service; in one instance the bereaved "widow man" sat beside his second choice, who wept profusely over the fate of her predecessor. There are several reasons for the postponement of the sermon—one, that the preacher is often miles away and not available until the season of good roads.—Christian Endeavor World.

Good Advice.

"I feel I am going all to pieces!"

"Collect yourself, my dear fellow, collect yourself."

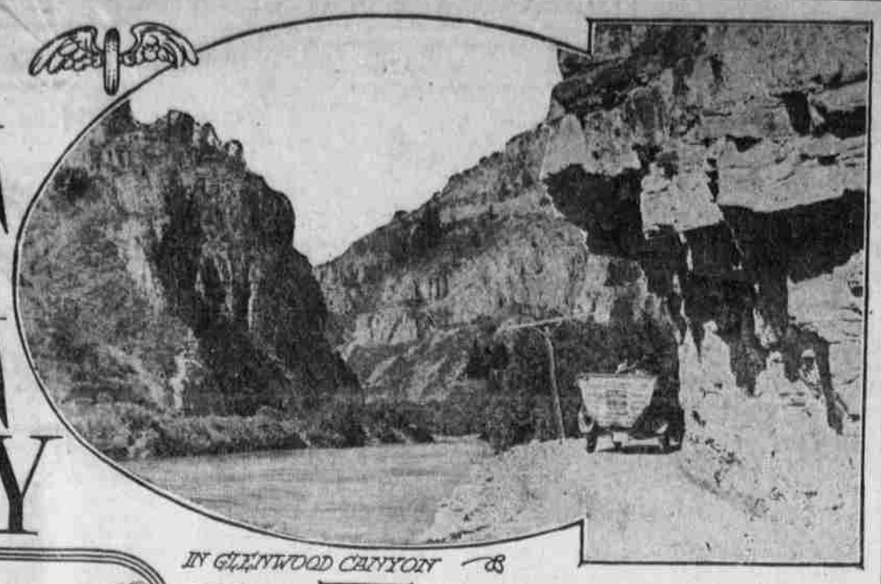
"Why don't you take a pick-me-up?"

The Appropriate Place.

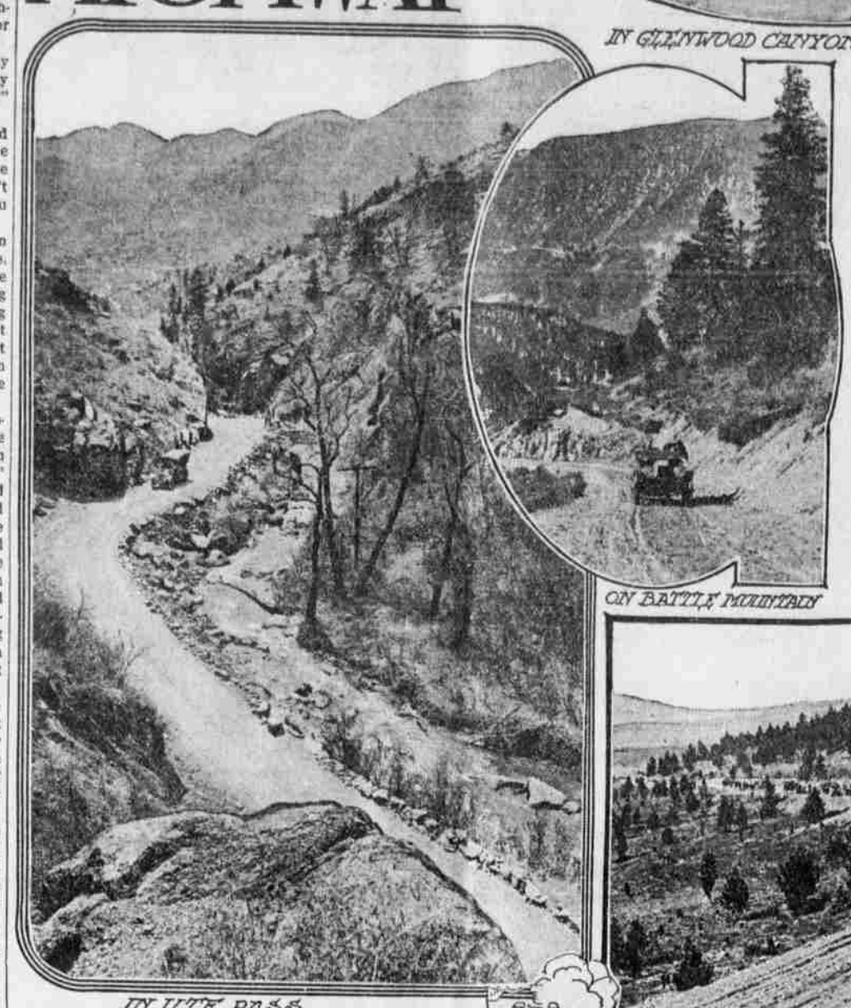
"Where is this electrical case to be tried?"

"I should think in the circuit court."

GREAT OCEAN to OCEAN HIGHWAY

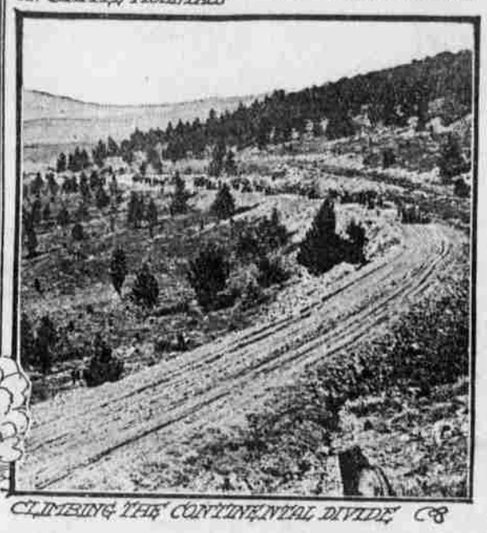


IN GLENWOOD CANYON



IN UTE PASS

ON BATTLE MOUNTAIN



CLIMBING THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

THE European war has focused attention more strongly than ever before upon the idea embodied in the phrase, "See America First." Thousands who have been in the habit of spending their vacations, winter or summer, abroad are scanning the map of the United States with renewed interest and are discovering that natural attractions, scenic wonders and good roads which they had hardly thought in existence are to be found without the necessity of making an ocean voyage.

With the great impetus which the automobile has within recent years given to touring and with the rapid development of better roads, the motorist has been traveling the highways and byways in search of scenes that are new and roads that are good. This year, 1915, will see a great stream of travel from east to west and west to east—attracted by the two California expositions and by the novelty of a transcontinental tour by motor.

Definite routes have been established, and the automobile owner now has almost as great a choice of routes as has the traveler by train. A truly remarkable work has been done within the last few years in developing highways and linking them together into interstate and national roads. They are named and marked, mapped and pictured until it is the exception for the motorist to find himself on a nameless route.

The latest of the transcontinental highways is the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean highway. This road is being developed by an association resulting from the federation of several strong state units.

The Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean highway has a distinctive organization from Terre Haute, Ind., to Salt Lake City, Utah, with splendid connections at both these termini. At Terre Haute it joins with the National Old Trails road, which carries it through Indianapolis, Columbus, Wheeling, Cumberland to the national capital, Washington, and thence to New York city. From Springfield, Ill., it also has a good connection through Toledo, Cleveland, Erie, Buffalo, Rochester, Albany and down the Hudson to New York city.

From Terre Haute, it continues westward through Springfield, Ill., crossing the Mississippi river at Hannibal, Mo., thence in a direct line over the Hannibal-St. Joseph Cross State highway through Missouri to St. Joseph. Here it joins the Rock Island highway through northern Kansas, through Belleville, Norton and Colby, to connect at the Colorado line with the Pikes Peak route through Limon to Colorado Springs. Here it enters the mountains through Ute pass, and after crossing the South park, begins the ascent of the continental divide which is achieved, just beyond Leadville, on a 4 per cent grade over an improved road. The top of Tennessee pass, 10,400 feet above sea level, is the highest point on the road between the two oceans, and now begins the descent to the Pacific side. The thrilling ride over Battle mountain is followed by the peaceful Eagle River valley, which leads into the Glenwood canyon, where the road follows the Canyon of the Grand River to Glenwood Springs. At Rifle, the highway turns northward from the railroad, through Meeker, Colo., Vernal, Roosevelt and Duchesne, Utah, to Provo and Salt Lake City. At the Mormon capital it has several connections westward, both to the north and south of the lake, via the Lincoln highway through Reno to San Francisco, or the road by way of Tonopah to either Los Angeles or San Francisco.

A look at the map will show that the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean highway crosses the central part of the United States in a line as straight as the contour of the country will permit; that it traverses a section rich in natural resources, of diversified commercial agricultural and mining interest; of varying topography; a section of the United States of historic associations, and that it cuts through the heart of the Rocky mountains and makes accessible magnificence and grandeur unrivaled in all the world.

To demonstrate the feasibility of this highway, there was held last summer an official inspection trip from St. Joseph to Colorado Springs, followed by a reliability run from that point to Salt Lake City. Regarding that portion of the road between St. Joseph and Colorado Springs a member of the official party said: "This tour holds no dreariness, no weariness, no monotony. This is pleasant thoroughfare. The meeting that was the forerunner of this trail was held in March, 1912, and so busy have the promoters been that you can speed along the whole way at a rate of from twenty-five to thirty-five miles an hour—and we did. Markers everywhere tell you when and how to turn. Hospitality greets you on every hand. There are long, level stretches in Kansas; you'd be disappointed if there weren't. You run through them just long enough to get enjoyment out of the scene, and then you dip down into the most delicious valleys and around wooded trails and through bosky dells. You always think of toiling ox teams and clouds of dust and a dreadful thirst when you turn your mind toward western Kansas. But the real truth is that traveling through this country—and eastern Colorado as well—is a delightful surprise. You get just enough of everything you've heard about as being there, and never too much. You see jack rabbits, and prairie dogs, and sod houses, and tumble weed—and silos and cornfields—cornfields extending as far over the divide as you can see—and wheat until your eyes get tired of distance. Eastern Colorado is the biggest surprise. You are fascinated throughout by the scenery, the spirit of the country and the history, told you by men and by silent landmarks and tokens along the way."

"The trip from Colorado Springs to Salt Lake City by auto over the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean highway leaves the memory full of pleasant impressions," said one of the members of the reliability party. "Every mile of the way is interesting; most of it is pleasant, and some of it is both charming and thrilling. No one can truthfully say that he has seen the grandeur and beauty of the Rocky mountains unless he has made this trip. We enter the mountains at Manitou, through historic Ute pass. The canyon broadens, and then the road winds over pine-covered hills. The bright colors of the rock change to gray, and rugged formations to comparatively smooth hills; a great rock basin, miles across, lies before us; we catch glimpses of snow-capped mountains 80 miles away. We climb through picturesque weeded hills, and as we reach the top of a small pass get our first view of South park—a great tableland, 20 miles long and 40 wide. Beyond, a winding road leads to Buena Vista, and as we follow up the Arkansas river, we pass over the "Eye Brow" road. It is not long until we catch glimpses of Twin lakes—great crystal gems that nestle about the feet of towering mountains. A boulevard leads to Leadville, world-famed mining camp, and the highest city of its size in the world. It is only nine miles to the Continental divide—Tennessee pass, two miles above sea level. The road is smooth as a boulevard, and the upgrade is only 4 per cent. After leaving the Continental divide the road runs over an abandoned railroad grade around and through a valley of indescribe charm; we pass into a rugged canyon to the town of Red Cliff and begin the ascent of Battle mountain. Half way up the mountain one forgets his scare in the fascination of the panorama which unrolls before him. Now we proceed along the top of the canyon rim past a mining camp; and again we are thrilled as we look into the yawning depths below—the ride along the shelf of this gorge for miles is thrilling—fascinating beyond the power of words. Then we descend into the Eagle River valley and pass from almost appalling grandeur into a peaceful, fertile valley. A run of 45 miles brings us to the entrance to Glenwood canyon, through which runs the Grand river. No word artist can describe this trip as the automobile winds over the narrow road around the base of towering painted cliffs and peaks which assume a multitude of fantastic shapes. Each turn in the canyon brings new charms, and still the decorated walls, the rushing river that hurls itself in sinuous curves over the stony bed—until at last we pass out of the canyon directly into the delightful resort of Glenwood Springs. The ride to Rifle is most refreshing; in place of the ruggedness of the awesome canyon, we have a broad fertile valley, framed by gently rising, bright red mountains. Here the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean highway leaves the railroad and turns north, through a country of quiet, pleasing but varied beauty, to Meeker, an inland town in the broad, fertile valley of White river. After leaving the rich, irrigated land, much of the country is not particularly interesting, and between Rangely and the Utah line is the only section of desert, 25 miles, traversed by this highway. As soon as we cross over into Utah we reach a graded road, through flat tableland skirted with rolling, rocky hills. Jensen on the Green river is surrounded by a fertile, well-cultivated valley, and it is most refreshing to come into this prosperous agricultural country which continues as we go westward through the Uintah basin. To the weary traveler, Vernal is an oasis in a desert; some day a railroad will run through this country, and when it does, this will be one of the richest and most desirable sections in the West. We pass through Fort Duchesne, an abandoned military fort; then on to Roosevelt and Myton, both new, modern, progressive towns. All the way from the Utah line to Duchesne we have good, traveled roads; here there are two auto roads to the railroad; one to Colton, 51 miles, and the other to Heber, 80 miles. The road to Provo is through Provo canyon, one of the most beautiful scenic canyons in the mountains. Provo is a modern city, picturesquely located between the mountains and Utah lake, and is an attractive place to visit. A splended graded road, running sufficiently high above the great Utah valley to give a pleasing view of mountain and plain and fields of billowing grain, completes the run into Salt Lake City."

Other things being equal, the transcontinental tourist will naturally seek the route of greatest scenic interest.

Because it does traverse the heart of the scenic country of Colorado and Utah, the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean highway, therefore, holds the key to the transcontinental situation. It is the natural and logical way—and its further development is assured by the states, cities, counties and communities through which it passes. Merely drawing a line on a map and giving it a name does not make a transcontinental highway, and the important fact about the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean highway is that the state units were already in high state of development before any effort was made to attract travel or to federate for the development of the highway.

AFTER THE WINTER'S COLD

Thoreau Was Never Able to Determine Exactly the First Thing That Stirred in the Spring.

Thoreau, as revealed in his journal, was for years trying to settle in his own mind what was the first thing that stirred in spring, after the severe New England winter—in what was the first sign or pulse of returning life manifest; and he never seems to have been quite sure. He could not get his salt on the tail of his bird. He dug into the swamps, he peered into the water, he felt with benumbed hands for the radical leaves of the plants under the snow; he inspected the buds on the willows, the catkins on the alders; he went out before daylight of a March morning and remained out after dark; he watched the lichens and mosses on the rocks; he listened for the birds; he was on the alert for the first frog ("Can you be absolutely sure," he says, "that you have heard the first frog that croaked in the township?"); he stuck a pin here and he stuck a pin there, and there, and still he could not satisfy himself. Nor can anyone. Life appears to start in several things simultaneously. Of a warm, thawy day in February the snow is suddenly covered with myriads of snow fleas looking like black new powder just spilled there. Or you may see a winged insect in the air. Or the selfsame day the grass in the spring run and the catkins on the alders will have started a little; and if you look sharply, while passing along some sheltered nook or grassy slope where the sunshine lies warm on the bare ground, you will probably see a grasshopper or two. The grass hatches out under the snow, and why should not the grasshopper?—John Burroughs, "Signs and Seasons."

Ups and Downs.

George—Dearest, I could lay down my life for you.

Mabel—But, love, you fail horribly when it comes to laying up anything, don't you?—Puck.

HOME TOWN HELPS

SOUNDS A DISCORDANT NOTE

Plan for Civic Beautification Is Opposed by Leading Pittsburgh Journal.

At Atlantic City the United States department of agriculture proposes to demonstrate for the country what can be accomplished in civic beautification by transforming bare lots, street terraces, portions of playgrounds and vacant property into flower gardens. Alexander Weintrob, who last year visited Europe to see what is being done there to spread the beautification movement among the people has been designated in charge of the Atlantic City plan. Substitution of flowers for vegetables in lot development will be urged generally, it is said, if it succeeds there.

The project, says the Pittsburgh Dispatch, recalls the free seed largess. If the department of agriculture is going to try to make those seeds grow, something that few of the recipients of congressional bounty have been able to do, it may be all right, but it seems as much a waste of governmental effort as the seed distribution is of public money.

Civic beautification, further observes the Dispatch, might well be left to the various communities themselves. If Atlantic City householders or lot owners prefer vegetables to flowers, in the hope of cutting down the cost of living or making money supplying the tables of visitors, why should Uncle Sam intervene? Just at this time, with so many important crop problems to be considered, the department might be more profitably employed on practical work.

TREES ON PUBLIC STREETS

New York Authority Would Have Municipalities Take Up Work of Planting and Care.

The New York State college of forestry at Syracuse university is urging the municipalities of the state to take up public control of street tree planting and preservation in the same manner as public control is exercised over other street improvements. During the last year the college has made investigation of the shade trees in many cities and towns of the state, including New York city, Syracuse, Binghamton, Amsterdam, Mt. Vernon, Newburg and Olean. It has been found that thousands of shade trees are dying along the streets of the cities due to past mistakes in selection of varieties and in spacing the trees at the time of planting.

Within the cities of the state there are, it is said, 20,000 miles of street capable of sustaining a growth of 5,000,000 shade trees, which can be made worth $100,000,000 in increased property value. Buffalo spends annually about $75,000 for planting and conservation of shade trees along its public streets.

Almost half of the land area of New York state is better suited, it is said, to the growing of timber than to agriculture. Agriculture alone cannot solve the land problems of the state. Forestry and agriculture are co-ordinate, and together will bring about the most effective utilization of the soils of the state and of the country. —New York Press.

PAYS TO GUARD THE TREES

Either on Street or Lawn, It Is a Mistake to Leave the Saplings Unprotected.

Young trees, especially street trees, should be protected and supported by tree guards placed around them immediately after planting. For street trees, a wire or metal guard is most economical. For lawn trees, a single stake firmly driven into the soil is usually sufficient. Leather or canvas straps should be used to attach the tree to the support.

Cultivation of the soil for three feet around the tree is beneficial during the first years of growth. Loosen the top soil with a spade or hoe a sufficient number of times during the season to keep down weeds and grass. A mulch of leaves or manure in the fall retains moisture and acts as a fertilizer when spaded under. During the hot, dry periods of the summer months, watering should be done once or twice each week, not oftener. The feeding roots which take up the moisture are at a distance from the trunk equal to the length of the branches, and the water should be applied liberally, but not too frequently, to these feeding roots.

Improving the Little Red School.

At its recent annual meeting in Springfield the Illinois State Teachers' association passed resolutions, of which this was one:

"We favor a law requiring the erection of schoolhouses on plans providing for proper heating, lighting, ventilation, seating and other sanitary arrangements, as provided by the department of public instruction."

Improvement of the facilities, accommodations and surroundings of country schools is a highly important development. Better rural schools will aid materially in checking the drift of the population from the country to the city.

Earthquake Distribution.

Rev. H. V. Gill, an English clergyman, on studying the dates and places of occurrence of 889 earthquakes, found that 674, or more than three-quarters of them, occurred in sequences, the successive units of which were separated by a week or less. Mr. Gill believes that any great displacement of the crust of the earth makes the earth to rotate unevenly or "wobble," and that the unevenness of motion has to be neutralized by displacements in other regions, where they will balance the original displacement.